

Amendments to the Claims

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. – 27. (cancelled)

28. (currently amended) A method of screening a candidate compound for the ability to inhibit dimer assembly and secretion of a dimeric form of interleukin, comprising the steps of:

incubating a cell culture comprising a cell line ~~of Claim 17 transfected with an expression vector comprising DNA encoding a subunit of a dimeric form of interleukin under transcriptional control of an ecdysone-inducible promoter~~ with the candidate compound;

inducing transcription of the dimeric interleukin in the cells of the culture using ecdysone or an ecdysone analog; and

assaying the cell culture for the presence of secreted interleukin.

29. (currently amended) A The method as claimed in Claim 28, and in which the interleukin expressed by the cell line has a 6 x histidine amino acid sequence tagged on either or both of the subunits thereof, wherein the assaying step involves Ni-NTA affinity chromatography.

30. (currently amended) A The method as claimed in Claim 28 in which the assaying step involves probing the cell culture with an antibody specific to a dimeric form of interleukin, or a subunit thereof.

31. (cancelled)

32. (cancelled)

33. (cancelled)

34. (cancelled)

35. (cancelled)

36. (cancelled)

37. (cancelled)

38. (cancelled)

39. (cancelled)

40. (cancelled)

41. (cancelled)

42. (new) The method according to Claim 28 wherein the subunit of dimeric form of interleukin is selected from the group consisting of p35 (alpha) subunit of interleukin 12 (IL-12); p40 (beta) subunit of IL-12; p19 chain of IL-23; p40 subunit of IL-23; ebi3 subunit of IL-27; and p28 subunit of IL-27.

43. (new) The method according to Claim 28 wherein the cell line is capable of producing heterodimeric IL-12, the cell line being transfected with an expression vector in which the DNA encodes a p40 subunit of IL-12 and an expression vector in which the DNA encodes a p35 subunit of IL-12.

44. (new) The method according to Claim 28 wherein the cell line is capable of producing heterodimeric IL-23, the cell line being transfected with an expression vector in which the DNA encodes a p40 subunit of IL-12 and an expression vector in which the DNA encodes a p19 subunit of IL-23.
45. (new) The method according to Claim 28 wherein the cell line includes plasmid pVgRxR.
46. (new) The method according to claim 28 in which the cell line comprises cells which are human embryonic kidney cells.
47. (new) The method according to claim 28 in which the cell line comprises human embryonic kidney cells which include plasmid pVgRxR.
48. (new) The method according claim 28 in which the cell line comprises cells which are natural β subunit-producing cells.
49. (new) The method according to claim 28 in which the cell line is the cell line having ECACC accession number 03112701.